



A Grape Discovery Center

For Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania

Grape growing in the Concord Grape Belt began in 1849 when Elijah Fay planted Concord seedlings in Brocton, NY. This began an industry that would grow to cover 30,000 acres bordered by Lake Erie and the Allegheny Plateau Escarpment. This land was pre-destined for grape growing with a climate tempered by Lake Erie and soil well suited for native American and European hybrid varieties. Horace Greeley called the Concord the “grape for the millions.”

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Celebrating our heritage, welcoming visitors, providing refreshment and health with homegrown products.

The community of grape farmers has been providing consumers with healthful products for many generations. The vines themselves are renewed from “dipping” a cordon from an adjacent vine into the ground. A new vine readily roots from the dipper and within a couple seasons it stretches itself to the top trellis wire and provides new fruit in a never ending cycle.

Commercial grape growing has been the backbone of the regional economy for well over 100 years. Other commercial agricultural crops, including tomatoes, currants, and dairy have found other more economically favorable locales, but grapes have endured. The heartiness of the American varieties grown in this area, also known as the ‘Snow Belt’, match the character of the people who live and work here. Ttt kkkwue, who wrote “America the Beautiful” must have conjured up the image of our grapes viewed from the escarpment “above the fruited plain.” Row upon row of trellised grapes add ambiance to the land and vitality to the economy. Today, over 800 farmers tend approximately 30,000 acres of vineyards. The economic impact of the activities stemming from the region’s grapes is over \$340 million annually.



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The grape juice industry in the two-county Concord Grape Belt annually...

- supports over 1,900 jobs
- generates \$54 million in wages
- supports 800 farm families
- generates \$349 million in total economic impact (returns to farmers, wages to juice manufacturing employees, and income to businesses which provide goods and services to the juice industry.)
- generates 35,000 visits to wineries
- generates wine sales of \$17.5 million





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The “French Paradox” was widely reported in the late 1990’s. People in France enjoyed their red wine and their high fat foods. Their incidence of heart disease however was shown to be much lower than similar high fat diets in the US where wine drinking is much less prevalent. Since that time, Red wine sales have risen strongly and have surpassed the once dominant white wine and grape juice enjoyed a similar boost. What is the next big news? **Our grapes are locally grown, have a small carbon footprint, are high in antioxidants, polyphenols, resveratrol and other healthful compounds**, but how does this resonate with consumers?

A Vision for the Future

The Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association was founded in 2002. Its mission is:

To encourage and support the dynamic economic development of the grape and wine industries, tourism, and associated industries throughout the Lake Erie Region that is built upon our Concord grape heritage and results in an enhanced quality of life for all the region’s citizens.

The goal of establishing a Grape Discovery Center has been the cornerstone project for this association. The Association has been building toward this goal with support from a wide range of stakeholders including farmers, processors, wineries, universities, tourism and industrial development agencies, and local towns, counties and state agencies. This has been a two state effort. The Grape Belt boundary stops where the hills meet the Lake not at the state line. The depth of this support has fueled many significant accomplishments including establishing a website, creation of a tourism DVD and other promotional items, publication of an economic impact study, publication of a Grape Belt Calendar, and being designated as a NY State Heritage Area.

Millions of travelers pass through the Grape Belt every year. Most don’t know what those crops are growing alongside the road. Some pull off for the wineries, fishing, bird watching, farm markets, and festivals, but few know about the unique character of our land and its connection to the grape. There is a great story to tell. The CGBHA needs an experiential place to welcome travelers and tell them our story, accompanied by a taste of wine, and other grape items. Such an experience will influence the consumer’s future buying decisions. A GDC helps the industry maintain the relevance of its products with consumers. No one else is going to tell the story for us.



The Plan

In May 2007 a concept level plan was developed to determine if the CGBHA could feasibly operate a Grape Discovery Center. It was discovered that there were several self sustaining agriculturally themed Centers. Examples include The Grove House in Lake Wales, FL; The Wild Blueberry Museum in Oxford, Nova Scotia, Canada, and the Cranberry Discovery Center in Warrens, WI.

The Director of the Cranberry Discovery Center graciously provided data to the CGBHA regarding the income and expenses generated from their Center. The CDC also provided an on-site tour of their Wisconsin facility to one of the CGBHA board members to support the planning process. The CDC is located 3 miles off of I-94. The town has less than 3000 people and the closest cities are Chicago and Minneapolis (3-4 hours away). The CDC is housed in an old 6000 ft² cranberry packing warehouse, and welcomes approximately 40,000 visitors/year. Operating hours are adjusted with the seasons. Advertising is effectively accomplished with two I-94 billboards within 5 miles of the Warren's exit. Approximately 90% of the visitors are out of town travelers.

The plan for the Grape Discovery Center identified the attributes of a good site. These included:

- ample parking and access
- Minimum size of 6000 ft²
- easy to find from I-90
- a welcoming community and neighbors who would support this tourist attraction
- Located near vineyards with view of Lake and/or escarpment

Other beneficial attributes were:

- Outdoor space for future festivals
- City water and sewer services
- Building history with link to grape heritage
- Institutional kitchen facilities
- Well equipped restroom and heating and AC services

A site evaluation committee was formed in early 2008. The architectural design and planning firm of R.W. Larsen and Associates from Jamestown was commissioned to help evaluate three potential sites and provide an opinion of probable costs for establishing the GDC at these sites. A plan for establishing a brand new site was also evaluated.

John Shedd of R.W. Larsen had been following the work of the CGBHA for several years and was intrigued with the Associations plans. The site selected was the former McFadden Ford dealership on Rt. 20; 1.5 miles east of the village of Westfield. This site has excellent parking, road access, located adjacent to a vineyard and has an impressive view of the Escarpment. The condition of the building was the best of all those evaluated and at 13,000 ft² it has room for future expansion and storage of artifacts.

A funding proposal was submitted to State Senator Kathy Young during the F09 State Budget appropriations process. The request was for \$1,000,000 of capital funding for the purchase and renovation of the proposed site. Senator Young is the Chair of the State Senate Agriculture Committee. Her efforts and influence have provided much needed support to the local and state grape industry including construction of a new Vineyard Research Lab in Portland, NY, funding for concord grape promotions, funding for regional grape branding initiatives, and funding for Agritourism projects. On August 13, 2008, the approval of \$1,050,000 of state funding for the Grape Discovery Center was announced to the public.



The Grape Discovery Center Comes to Life

The Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association is a 501-c-3 organization. This will allow the new center to operate as a nonprofit enterprise and provide donors with tax deductibility for their charitable gifts.

Visitors to the Center will stroll through interesting displays and interactive exhibits and experience the many facets of the grape growing industry. Initially, about ½ of the current building will be utilized for the Center. The space will include:

Main Grape Lobby: Here, our visitors will be welcomed to the Center and gather around a large relief map of the Concord Grape Belt. The map will depict the interaction of Lake Erie and the Allegheny Plateau Escarpment and how these geographical bodies form create the perfect environment for growing grapes.

The Grape Learning Center: Through exhibits and hands on displays, discover what makes western NY and northwestern PA, America's Grape Country. Learn about Elijah Fay, creation of Welch's, see how grapes were grown and harvested in the 1800's and today. Sample and see how wine, juice, puree, jelly and grape seed oil are produced. See how farmer's remain stewards of the land.

A Media Room - Theatre: will show educational videos to visitors of the center. Featuring a ride on a grape picker and the annual cycle of growth of a grape vine. The room will be sufficient to accommodate school field trips and bus tours.

The Gift Shop and Snack Bar: Here visitors can purchase mementos to remember their trip to America's Grape Country. Unique local grape based foods will be available for tasting and purchase. Growth opportunities will exist for the remaining space to include:

A Wine Tasting Center: here visitors will be able to participate in fee based sampling of local wines and learn more about where to visit the 21 wineries on the Chautauqua wine Trail

A Commercial Kitchen: This kitchen will not only prepare foods for on-site sale, but serve as an incubator for others to develop their local products

Vineyard Tours: The center has excellent access to adjoining farms and wineries and intends to foster relationships to allow visitors to experience life on a grape farm.



Casks & Press



Furniture from Reclaimed Casks



Pergola & Vine Growth

The Center will incorporate green technology to the extent possible and incorporate old barn wood, wine barrels and grape crates into the decor.



CONCORD GRAPE BELT HERITAGE ASSOCIATION PROPOSED PLAN

Route 20

Where Will the Center be Located?

The address for the Grape Discovery Center is ___- West Main Rd. Westfield, NY. The building sits on 3.5 acres of land and is 13,000 ft²

What is the schedule of development for the Center?

The initial state funding is sufficient to purchase the building and make all needed modifications to prepare the interior and exterior for creation of exhibit space and retail area. This acquisition and renovation should take until mid 2009. The interior space design and exhibit planning will be running concurrently with the fundraising campaign. The opening of the Center is anticipated to be Spring 2010.

How much will the Center cost?

The total project cost is between \$1.7 - \$2.1 million. An agritourism Grant has been acquired to support design and exhibit planning to refine the final estimate. The state commitment of 1.05 million will be used to leverage other sources of funding including commitments from area grape processors, farmers, wineries, hospitality businesses, and other economic development agencies.

Will the new center charge admission fees to visitors?

Yes. This is part of the way the Center will become self sufficient. The fees will be in the \$5 - \$10 range determined from a tourism survey scheduled to be conducted in 2009. Additional income is expected to be generated from gift shop and concession sales. The use of unplanned space for a wine sampling, kitchen or artisan incubator may also provide sufficient funds for further development at the site.

How many people are expected to visit the Center?

Visitor ship will vary seasonally and annually. The bulk of visitors will be from June – October. The first three years are projected below:

2010	40,000 visitors
2011	50,000 visitors
2012	55,000 visitors

These projections are considered conservative. The location and access is considered to be excellent and should outpace the CDC figures. In addition, the first year of operation at the Wine and Culinary Center in Canandaigua, NY had 100,000 visitors.

How will the Center impact other businesses in the area?

The majority of visitors to the Center will come from the I-90 from either the Ripley or Westfield exits. These visitors will likely be drawn to area restaurants, wineries and other related businesses. The CDC spawned greater area restaurant traffic, and some start up craft and farm markets. Similar development would be expected.

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Quick Grape Facts

The Concord Grape Belt is the largest grape growing region outside of California

The Concord Grape Belt is the Oldest and Largest Concord Grape growing region in the world

The native American varieties of grapes make up the majority of the acres

The people from the Concord Grape Belt are proud of our long heritage of growing grapes. A culture of hearty people has developed from the same land that cultivates hearty grapes. It is a special place that needs to be shown off.



Growers queue to deliver the harvest, 1907. Charles E. Welch sought grower loyalty.

Our Heritage, Our Future, Our Home

The complete development of the Grape Discovery Center will only come about with the final financial support of Association members, industry partners, grape farmers, members of the local hospitality industry, and concerned community members who cherish the lifestyle that grape growing has helped to secure and sustain. The creation of the Center has many benefits to the community at large. It will bring more travelers to our towns, wineries, and eateries. It is a way of preserving our way of life and telling our story to insure its future. The educational aspects do not stop with travelers. Our own generations have become more and more separated from the farm. The Center is a means of reconnecting our children to the activities they are no longer exposed to and may take for granted.

The Grape Discovery Center will be a showcase for the Western NY and Northwestern PA grape industry, that growers can be proud of.

A quote from someone.....xxx x xxx xxx xxxxxxx xx xxxxxx xxxx xxxx xx xxx xxxx
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Tell us what you think

The Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association has authorized a fundraising campaign to be conducted by: _____. This campaign has a goal of raising \$750,000 to complete the development of the Grape Discovery Center. This process is incomplete without support from our members, and stakeholders from the community. We hope you will share your time and insight for this pressing community project. A representative from the association will contact you shortly to arrange a confidential interview.

*A special place within the new Center will be dedicated to honor the support of our donors.
Ask our representative for more details.*

Members of the Grape Discovery Center Planning Team

Andy Dufresne, *CGBHA Executive Director*

Helen Baran, *Grape Farmer, CGBHA, CoChair (NY)*

Mary Ellen Wensel, *Northeast Savings Bank Mgr, CGBHA CChair (PA)*

Tom Davenport, *Sr. Viticulturist National Grape Cooperative/Welchs*

Dave Momberger, *General Manager, Growers Cooperative Grape Juice Co, Inc.*

John Shedd, *R.W. Larson Architects and Designers*

Contact Information?

